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# Radio Communication



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**THE VOICE OF AMATEUR RADIO FOR 80 YEARS**



**Exclusive: H M King Hussein, JY1, talks to RadCom**

# The Hobby of Kings

**We all know what fun amateur radio is but if we could do anything and money was no object, would we still choose it as a hobby? King Hussein says a firm "Yes"**

**H**IS MAJESTY, King Hussein bin Talal, JY1, is arguably the world's most famous radio amateur. How many of us have mentioned him when incredulous friends and relations (or the Press) ask "what on earth do you get from your radio?". It is useful to be able to demonstrate that there must be something in it by quoting household names: the late Rajiv Gandhi, King Juan Carlos of Spain, President Menem of Argentina, Senator Barry Goldwater and so on. If they can enjoy amateur radio, then it must be great for us lesser mortals.

But what does someone with unlimited facilities for travel and communications *really* get from the hobby? In a 45 minute interview with *RadCom*, King Hussein explained his philosophy.

## A Large Family

WE WONDERED what first made the King aware of amateur radio? He revealed that "actually it was a very kind present (a Hallicrafters radio) that I received many years ago, more years than I care to remember . . . and my interest has always been in people and in communication amongst them."

It is this fascination with people communicating which is the key to his interest in amateur radio. It may well also be the reason that King Hussein has survived in power for several decades in contrast to many of his contemporaries in the Middle East.

"It has given me the opportunity to know people throughout the world and, in many cases, to visit them later and to realize that we belong to a very large family that inhabits the global village which is our home now. It has also enabled me to encourage many Jordanians to be involved in this field, both in terms of the technical side as well as in terms of the communications side which is just as important. It has given me the opportunity, whenever I have been able to be active, to



PHOTOGRAPHS: RAYMOND IRONS

**King Hussein on amateur radio: "It has given me the opportunity to know people throughout the world and . . . to realize that we belong to a very large family that inhabits the global village which is our home now."**

also move away completely from whatever my responsibilities were, and to have a complete break, a complete switch-off."

## Friends all over the World

**IS HE REALLY ACTIVE?** "Not as much as I used to be, but whenever I move to I try to come on. I have a station in this country but we recently had a bit of a disaster with the antenna - it broke. We tried to take it down and it crashed down, as has happened to me several times in life. It is up and running again now."

"And I've also been honoured to have gained permission to op-

erate from different countries. I have a callsign here (G0/JY1) as you know. And I operate from the United States, Spain, Austria, Canada . . . I try to operate whenever and wherever I can. I have constructed equipment but not as much as I would have liked to."

He maintains a well-equipped station in Jordan: "The equipment I was with for many years was a Drake. But right now we have moved on to the Icom 781."

His natural diplomacy makes him reluctant to single out his most interesting contact but the enthusiasm is obvious when he describes what amateur radio means to him:

"In times of crisis and difficulty,

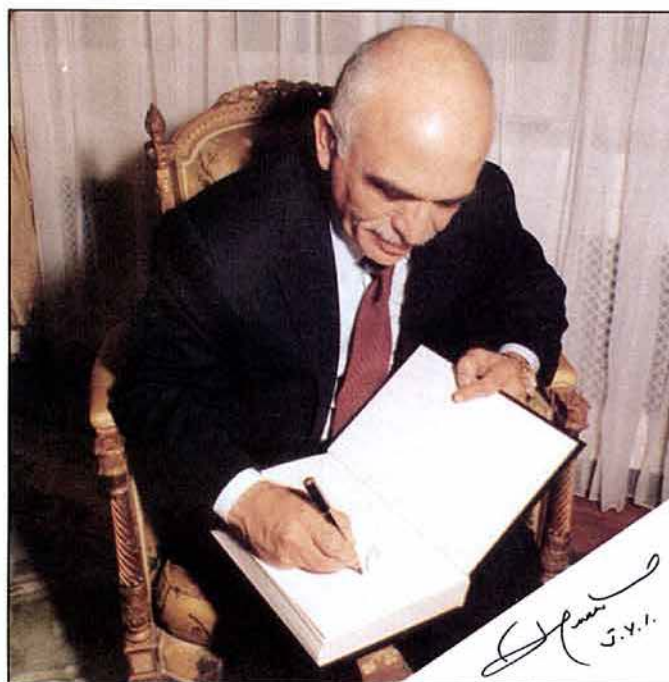
it was a way to keep in touch with friends throughout the world who were able to help relay messages and to secure humanitarian help as well. Such was the case in the period 1967-70 in particular. In Jordan communications were severely damaged at times and then we were able to . . . through the help of many friends . . . secure medical assistance.

"I've enjoyed also talking to all age groups with all kinds of interests. People who have sustained injuries which prevent them doing very much other than using their abilities to get in touch with friends throughout the world."

And he's a DXer too. "I tried to make initially as many contacts



The Jordanian flag flies above Belgravia.



A souvenir for the RSGB Library. King Hussein signs a *RadCom* bound volume.

as I could so that we could log them and then maybe get some awards. I can't remember exactly what the number (of DXCC countries) is but we passed the 150 mark many years ago.

"We try to help our friends whenever they come to visit to operate from Jordan; we helped in some of the expeditions as well, setting them up and providing the equipment - to provide new areas for people to contact"

## King to King

HE DESCRIBES proudly a contact with the first amateur to operate from space - Owen Garriott, W5LFL, on the space shuttle Columbia: "We managed to arrange a schedule with him on his 92nd orbit. It was an excellent contact - something like three or four minutes horizon to horizon. We were following him with a directional antenna."

In what must have been a remarkable contact to listen to, King Hussein of Jordan has spoken to King Juan Carlos of Spain over the air. He also talked about amateur radio with Rajiv Gandhi, VU2RG, when they met.

He is obviously a man who enjoys talking to people. How, then does he square the obvious demands of the pile-up, and his desire to make friends? "I realise that one has to do both, but of late it's become almost impossible. Because whenever one comes up, within a matter of a few minutes, more than usually you would have a pile-up and my hearing is not as good as it used to be. I've operated aeronautical mobile quite a bit in the past on the HF bands but the pile-up is even worse."

## AR in Jordan

AMATEUR RADIO in Jordan is expanding with around two hundred licensees of all ages. Amman has VHF and UHF repeaters with a very high standard of operation and a friendly welcome is given to visitors. The licensing system is similar to ours - an exam leads to a B class licence and for an A class licence (which includes the WARC bands) a Morse test is required. UK licensees can easily obtain temporary JY8 callsigns.

Other Royal licensees include HRH the Crown Prince, El Hassan bin Talal, JY2HT and the Chairman of the Royal Jordanian ARS, Prince Ra'ad, JY3RZ.

JY1 operates almost exclusively SSB, and sometimes in contests. His QSL cards are too many to display, but the shack wall is decorated with awards.

He agrees that amateur radio is a good hobby for young people: "We have over the years presented several schools with equipment or helped them with regard to club radios."

King Hussein has many ham friends in the UK, though characteristically he declines to single anyone out. He has visited some in their homes which must be the ultimate proof of amateur radio as the great leveller.

As an RSGB member, King Hussein reads *RadCom* and he tells us he enjoys it. He was presented with a 1992 Bound Volume of *RadCom* and a copy of the July 1991 edition which featured a visit to Jordan by Robin Bellerby, G3ZYE, and a group from St Dunstons. In return, he signed a bound *RadCom* volume for the RSGB.



Above: Robin Bellerby, G3ZYE, whose involvement with the Anglo Jordanian Friendship Society was instrumental in making the interview possible.

Right: HM King Hussein, JY1, talks to *RadCom* Editor Mike Dennison, G3XDV whilst Assistant Editor Marcia Brimson takes notes.

